

NSC BRIEFING

21 April 1959

PORTUGAL

- I. Premier Salazar (70) in failing health and regime supporters increasingly convinced he has outlived usefulness and should retire.
- A. Security police greatly concerned over situation which involves widespread popular discontent with politico-social restrictions, economic stagnation and growing disaffection among military.
1. Coup planned against regime for 12 March was thwarted at last minute.
- 25X1C B. [REDACTED] revolution
- 25X1X in Portugal quite possible and could topple regime.
1. A successful revolt in Portugal would have repercussions in Spain and could eventually threaten Franco's position.
- II. [REDACTED] told U.S. naval
- 25X1X attache last month he felt he would be obliged "within the next 12 months or sooner" to advise Salazar to step down.
- 25X1X A. [REDACTED] he alone was strong enough to hold country together and claimed full support from military high command.
- III. A military junta not likely to satisfy opposition groups, such as National Independent Movement (MNI), which want far-reaching reforms.
- A. Some Communist infiltration of MNI reported.
- IV. None of possible military successors to Salazar likely to change Portugal's pro-Western orientation but they would probably demand economic aid in return for continued US use of Azores bases.

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